



February 14, 2022

Testimony for Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments,
Conservation and Development Agencies, H.B. No. 5037

Dear Co-Chair Senator Osten, Co-Chair Rep. Walker, Vice-Chair Senator Hartley, Vice-Chair Rep. Dathan, Vice-Chair Rep. Nolan, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am submitting this testimony for HB 5037 on behalf of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a nonprofit service organization that amplifies, empowers, and unites artists, creative organizations, and residents. Our region's creative ecosystem produces \$135 million in direct economic activity, supports 5,600 full-time equivalent jobs, and attracts 700,000 attendees annually ([source](#)). The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on artists and creative organizations continues today. But, if given the resources to thrive, they will restore our social connections, build cultural equity and racial justice, and support vibrant, healthy communities.

I must begin by saying **thank you!** The pandemic has devastated Connecticut's creative economy and the General Assembly provided historic levels of support to help artists, arts workers, and creative organizations. Along with critical investments from the federal government, private foundations, and donors, it's clear that Connecticut's elected officials believe in the power of our creative sector.

The Arts Council supports that the Governor's budget proposal maintains steady support with level funding for arts and cultural organizations through the Tourism Fund. However, this budget continues the practice of directly earmarking 70% of these funds through line item appropriations. **Connecticut is the only state in the nation ([see table 3](#)) that invests in its creative economy this way.** As a recent [Arts, Culture, and Tourism Caucus Summit Report](#) noted: "There were particular remarks about arts funding in Connecticut, especially in relation to 'line item' organizations that receive direct appropriations instead of participating in a competitive process. Several attendees noted that this current structure is neither equitable nor accessible." Instead, please shift this funding to our state arts agency, CT Office of the Arts, who can administer equitable, accessible, and accountable funding opportunities.

The Arts Council of Greater New Haven also supports that the Governor's budget includes a new funding to **continue the CT Museums Kids Are Free Initiative for the next two summers**. This project was well managed and executed by the CT Office of the Arts last year. At a time when families are struggling

in countless ways, providing them with free opportunities to explore, learn, and have fun together is an invaluable investment.

Thanks for your enduring support for the power of arts, culture and for considering this recommendation. I would be happy to answer any additional questions as your process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Fitzmaurice', with a stylized, cursive script.

Daniel Fitzmaurice
Executive Director